

Shooters Island, Ships Graveyard: Vessel 54
Newark Bay
Staten Island
Richmond County
New York

HAER No. NY-162-C

HAER
NY
93-2-1001

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWING

Historic American Engineering Record
Mid-Atlantic Region

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: On Shooters Island on Newark Bay
Staten Island, Richmond County, New York and
Elizabeth-Bayonne, Hudson and Union Counties, New
Jersey

Date of Construction: c. 1890

Present Use: Not in use.

Significance: The remains of this vessel is probably the last in
existence of this type of vessel.

Project Information: Mitigative documentation on vessels on Shooters Island
was undertaken in compliance with a Memorandum of
Agreement among the Advisory Council on Historic
Preservation, the New Jersey State Historic Preserva-
tion Office, the New York State Preservation Office,
and the New York District Corps of Engineers in
accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic
Preservation Act of 1966. Documentation was prepared
by Historic Sites Research of Princeton, New Jersey,
during the winter of 1984-1985. The project was
conducted by Dr. Susan Kardas and Dr. Edward McM.
Larrabee, archaeologists and supervisors, with
architectural technicians Robert Nash and Leslie Duffy
Nash. Consultants included Norman Brouwer of the
South Street Seaport Museum.

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and Transmitted by: Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1987

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Vessel 54 is a former freight boat of a type sometimes called a "package freighter," developed in this country for fairly sheltered waters, such as the Chesapeake Bay or Long Island Sound, or for short coastal routes. Some cargo may have been loaded through deck hatches with mast and boom, but much of it would have been brought on board by hand trucks through side ports opened vertically, as evidenced by surviving iron hinges.

Based on construction methods, Vessel 54 probably dates from the late 1890s or early in this century. Instead of the large individual timbers characteristic of early 19th century hulls, groups of small timbers bolted together were used. She has a lattice of diagonal steel strapping between layers of the hull, which became popular around the turn of the century. These characteristics are typical of the last period of commercial building of wooden ships, when multiple pieces of wood, supplemented by steel elements, were substituted for the larger, carefully chosen timbers which had once been available. Vessel 54 may well be the last such vessel in existence.